

[Warren Harvey Flenniken]

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Winnsboro, S. C. 39056 FAIRFIELD COUNTY WARREN HARVEY FLENNIKEN

(white) 89 YEARS OLD.

Warren Flenniken is the oldest resident in the town of Winnsboro, Fairfield County, S. C. He is the only surviving Confederate soldier in Fairfield County. He and his wife reside in one of the fashionable homes on North Congress Street. His son-in-law, Charles F. Elliott, and his family reside with him.

"I was born October 5, 1848, in the Hopewell community of Chester County, S. C. My father was the Rev. Warren Flenniken, an Associate Reformed Presbyterian minister and pastor of the Hopewell A.R.P. Church. My mother, before marriage, was Jane Hearst Pressley. My brothers, Samuel Pressley, John Calvin, and David Reid, and my sisters, Mary and Sarah, are all dead. My father died in 1851, when I was a boy three years old. My mother lived to be ninety-one, and passed away to heaven June, 1903. After my father's death, my mother married Thomas Torbit of Chester, S. C. She, upon the death of Mr. Torbit, came and lived the remainder of her life with me.

"The school in our neighborhood of Hopewell was taught by two sisters, the Misses Webster. Yes, it was a school that charged tuition; each pupil paid so much per month. The teachers boarded around with different families. I remember the old blue-back speller for beginners. A picture was in the back of the book, showing a small boy up an apple tree being threatened with a stone in the hand of the owner of the orchard. Again, another picture was that of a woman going to market with a pail of milk on her head.

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"We learned the three R's, reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, and geography, too. Every Friday, we had a spelling match from the blue-back speller. Every pupil stood against the wall, the length of the whole room. Words were called by the teacher. When a pupil failed to spell a word correctly, it was passed to the next child. Should the next spell it incorrectly, it was passed on until correctly spelled by a pupil; and the successful one went up the line. It was a great honor to be at the head, and a disgrace to be at the foot of the line, when the test was concluded.

"There was not much playing in my school days. We commenced school at 8 a. m., and were instructed until 12 m. At the hour's intermission we ate our lunches and played games. We resumed study and recitations at 1 p. m. and continued until we were dismissed at 4 p. m.

"Father had a small farm and about twenty slaves. After his death, mother and my older brother managed the farm, and I worked on the farm on Saturdays. The slaves were taken to church on the Sabbath, when the roads were passable. The road system in my boyhood days was a wretched one. The slaves sat in the gallery of the church. Pianos and organs were regarded as sinful and sacrilegious in the observance of God's worship. Mr. J.W. Bigman was the 'leader' and another member was the 'liner-out'. Nothing but psalms were permitted to be sung in Hopewell Church. The 'liner-out' would read two lines in a loud voice. The 'leader' would rap his tuning fork on the bench by him, hold it near his ear and 'h'ist' the tune. A pause took place between each two lines, until the psalm of praise was rendered.

"Another peculiarity was the preparatory services before taking the communion on the following Sabbath. These services began on Friday and were continued, with two sermons a day, until the Sabbath. On Friday and Saturday 3 an elder of the church stood at the door, and the departing members obtained a metal token from him, which they had to present at the communion table on the Sabbath; otherwise he or she could not participate. The tokens were collected at the table and retained by the officer's until the

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next preparatory services for church communion. Yes, the slaves were encouraged to join in the singing; they were given tokens, and they communed at the table following the service to the white people.

“Mr. R. W. Brice was the pastor at Hopewell following my father. He married a school teacher, Miss Steel, and reared a fine family of boys and girls. He was insistent on boys and girls, white and blacks learning the Shorter Catechism. Card playing, dancing, shows, and theaters were preached against in our community as works of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

“We tried to make enough on the farm to feed and clothe ourselves and our slaves. The latter ate the same kind of food that we ate, and there was very little distinction in everyday clothes. Their health was of primary concern to mother.

“I am now six feet and one inch in height. I was a tall boy of sixteen years when I went to the Civil War. I left my mother at the gate of the home, weeping. I was in Captain Jiles J. Patterson's company, 3rd S. C. State Troops. Col. Gooding was the Regimental Commander. We were taken first to Camden, a small place near Augusta, Ga., and thereafter to James Island near Charleston, S. C. My service was not long. I enlisted in November 1864, and the war ended in April 1865, but I learned that war is hell. I am the only living Confederate soldier in Fairfield County.

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“I married Carrie Bradley of Abbeville, S. C. November 10, 1869. She lived only four months thereafter. I then came to Winnsboro and clerked for my brother, David R. Flenniken, who was in the mercantile business. Shortly after moving there, I married my present wife, Kate, who was a daughter of Col. A. K. Patton of Abbeville, a brother of the late Prof. E. L. Patton of the South Carolina College. Our marriage took place in Abbeville in 1881. She will have attained her eighty-first birthday if she lives until the 10th of next

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August. Perhaps you had better interview her separately, for I assure you it will be a longer and more informative interview of old time dresses and social customs than I can give.

“There was a deep abiding affection existing between the slave owners and the slaves. It was manifested all through the war and for a while after the war ended. I don't think there would have been any trouble had it not been for the adventurer and carpetbagger, who seized upon the opportunity to inflame the Negro's passionate desire for social equality and the race's power of equal suffrage at the ballot box.

“The military rule was not as oppressive as the carpetbag, scalawag government's misrule. What the Ku Klux Klan failed to do by illegal violence, the Red-shirt movement later accomplished by awe and persuasion.

“At this junction I think I'll tell you of a sensational killing that took place in Winnsboro and the subsequent trial in the courthouse that grew out of it. A writer of those times says:

“In those troublous times, the Republican county treasurer, Clark, / was killed by a prominent citizen, William D. Aiken, in an altercation about certain taxes claimed to have been paid by San DuBose, a cousin of Aiken. Mr. Aiken interferred in behalf of his friend and cousin, who was small and frail of stature. Clark was a larger and much more powerful man in physique and strength. In the struggle that 5 ensued, the county treasurer was killed. The case came up in the courthouse at Winnsboro before Judge Rutland, a renegade Judge, and a mixed jury of Republicans and Democrats. It was and still is regarded as the most celebrated case ever tried in Fairfield County. With the Solicitor, for the prosecution, appeared Daniel H. Chamberlain and Zeb Vance, afterward governors of South Carolina and North Carolina respectively. For the defense were Col. James H. Rion, James B. McCants and General M. C. Butler. In later years Butler was a United States Senator. Chamberlain made one of the greatest speeches of his brilliant career. As a legal argument it could not have been surpassed. In persuasive tone it was incomparable. He said in one of his flights of eloquence, which I try to paraphrase:

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'On the continent of our finest civilization, a range of mountains draws its lengthy chain of peaks in grandeur and beauty. It is the frequented spot of all native lovers. One of its grandest peaks is that of Mont Blanc in Switzerland. As the rains come from heaven above, the drops falling on one side trickle their way down, forming rills and streamlets that reach the beautiful valleys. These are dotted with the homes of a happy and prosperous people. Here is peace! Homes with innocent, laughing children. Here man loves his fellow men. Justice rules. Nothing is feared but God above. On the other side of the Alps, the raindrops meet the bitter, freezing, eastern winds. They precipitate into icy pellets. They collect to form the dreadful avalanche. In time, the force of gravity causes it to rush down the mountain side, carrying death and destruction to all in its pathway. On that side, life and habitation are impossible. The verdict of this jury will decide on which side our civilization will fall - law or anarchy!'

"Chamberlain continued the simile, but in spite of his able and eloquent advocacy and the aid of his resourceful conferees, the inscrutable design of Providence ruled that it was better for the progress of both races that the defense should come out victor in the trial.

"I shall be very glad for you to come again next week and interview Mrs. Flenniken. I am sure you will find it worthwhile, and we will be glad to see you."